

[Steel]

[?]

Accession no.

W 3661

Date received

10/10/40

Consignment no.

1

Shipped from

Wash. Office

Label

Amount

5p

WPA L. C. PROJECT Writers' UNIT

Folklore Collection (or Type)

Title Steel [Begin]: The ladels in the pits are big.

Place of origin Chicago, Illinois Date 4/3/39

Library of Congress

Project worker Sam Ross

Project editor

Remarks

W3661

Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FORM A

Circumstances of Interview Steel Workers Lore

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

No. Words

440

May 26 1939

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Sam Ross

ADDRESS 713 Rush Street

DATE April 3, 1939

Library of Congress

SUBJECT Steel

1. Date and time of interview -

April 9, 1939

2. Place of interview -

6310 Blackstone Avenue

3. Name and address of informant -

Nelson Walton - 6310 Blackstone Avenue

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. -

None

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you -

None

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. -

Two room apartment, a living room and kitchen, seeming packed with furniture because of a piano crowded into the room.

FORM C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FOLKLORE

Library of Congress

CHICAGO

No. Words

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Sam Ross

ADDRESS 713 Rush Street

DATE April 13, 1939

SUBJECT Steel

NAME OF INFORMANT Nelson Walton

I don't know how true this story is, I have been hearing it for years. Every time I try to pin the guy who tells the story down about what year the accident took place, where, and who the poor son of a bitch was I am evaded. But the boys say it is true. The story goes that a guy fell off, or was pushed off, one of the bridges into a ladle. You know what happens then. He goes pouff into nothing. Then the company buried the guy with the steel until the family got over the accident, or until they moved away. After that the company dug up the metal and used it in the process of making steel.

The last fatal accident we had was on the mold yard crane runway. There were three cranes on the runways: two slag cranes and a mold crane. Some molds were needed in a hurry and the foreman sent the mold crane operator down to get the crane man down from one of the slag cranes to relieve the man on the mold crane because he was faster. The guy thought he'd ride on the center crane instead of walking. Before the crane stopped he jumped off. It was pretty dark in the place and as he jumped he was crushed to death

Library of Congress

between the crane and the columns that support the roof of the building. Next day the company issued orders that no craneman can get on or off moving cranes.

1

The ladles in the pits are big. They weigh 175 tons. They are hooked up into the cranes by hookers in the pits. We had an old fellow, pretty well along in years and not as husky as he used to be. The hook got away from him and swung back from the ladle and hit him in the chest. That didn't kill him right away. But a few days later he died. The company doctors went over to examine him. They said the man had died from heart trouble.

For years steel has been made with soft ore, raw lime, scrap steel and a small amount of scrap iron. That made up about forty per cent of the total charge. The hot metal added made up about sixty per cent of the charge. A week or so ago the bosses got a brain storm and decided that ore was more expensive than 'cinder", which was nothing but old slag they had thrown away and which they were dragging out of the lake with their cintering plant. Now this 'cinder' is porous. And it was a fine business when the weather was dry. The bosses overlooked that the cinders were porous and hold a lot of moisture in damp weather. They had started that type of charge in dry weather and it worked fine. Yesterday was the second day of two damp days and the cinder they charged yesterday absorbed a great deal of moisture so that when hot metal was poured on the top of the partial melt in the furnace it trickled down to the cinders. A tremendous force of steam was created and two furnaces were blown up. And I was working on the crane when that happened. What a noise!

FORM D

Extra Comment

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FOLKLORE

Library of Congress

CHICAGO

No. Words

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Sam Ross

ADDRESS 713 Rush Street

DATE April 13, 1939

SUBJECT Steel

NAME OF INFORMANT Nelson Walton

I will fill out form C when I finish interviewing informant and will have additional extra comment then.

2

Most of the humor on the pit side is around the word jura which means in Polish hole. When things aren't set right in the holes of the furnaces the guy is always ribbed about putting some hair around it so that he might have a better chance of getting it in right.